

## June Leadership Circle Perseverance



### VIRTUE CORNER

Perseverance is another name for the Moral Virtue of Fortitude! Virtues – the good habits of behavior that, eventually, yield true peace of mind, strength of spirit, and fulfillment are like gardens. It's easy to get them started, but making them grow to fruition takes constant attention and work. If you don't keep watering them, fertilizing them, yanking out the weeds, and killing off the pests, your plants may survive, but they won't bear the fruit they're meant to. To enjoy the incomparable fruit of virtue, you have to persevere in the exercise of virtue, and exercise Fortitude in the pursuit there of.

The word originates from the Latin: *per severa* – "through severe difficulties". It is *the ability to undertake challenging though worthwhile endeavors and follow through with them*, no matter the cost. It includes courage, fortitude, patience, constancy, tenacity, determination. It is the stuff of heroes.

It is also the virtue that nourishes the other virtues, because in order to form or grow in any virtue (prudence, fairness, love, faith...), you have to exercise it continuously. Virtues are good habits, and habits are formed by repetition of acts, but repeating good, self-sacrificing actions is hard. Perseverance is the virtue that enables you to stick it out.

In today's parlance, you could call Perseverance, **Grit!** According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, grit in the context of behavior is defined as "firmness of character; indomitable spirit." Grit is passion and perseverance, for very long term goals. It is having stamina. Sticking with your future day in day out not just for the day or the month but for the years. It is living life like a marathon not a sprint. It is working at virtue day in and day out, over and over again.

Perseverance requires courage and the ability to manage fear of failure or hard work. Teddy Roosevelt, the Grand Sire of Grit, spoke in the Sorbonne in 1907, "It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strived valiantly; who errs, who comes again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly."

**Fortitude is the moral virtue that ensures firmness in difficulties and constancy in the pursuit of the good. It strengthens the resolve to resist temptations, and to overcome obstacles in the moral life. The virtue of fortitude enables one to conquer fear, even fear of death, and to face trials and persecutions. It disposes one even to renounce and sacrifice his life in defense of a just cause.**

— Catechism of the Catholic Church #1807



## GOSPEL REFLECTION (30 MIN)

### “The Agony of the Garden”

**Matthew 26: 36 – 46**

Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to feel sorrow and distress. Then he said to them, "My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch with me." He advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will." When he returned to his disciples he found them asleep. He said to Peter, "So you could not keep watch with me for one hour? Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Withdrawing a second time, he prayed again, "My Father, if it is not possible that this cup pass without my drinking it, your will be done!" Then he returned once more and found them asleep, for they could not keep their eyes open. He left them and withdrew again and prayed a third time, saying the same thing again. Then he returned to his disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Behold, the hour is at hand when the Son of Man is to be handed over to sinners. Get up, let us go. Look, my betrayer is at hand."

#### Questions for Discussion:

1. Context. Jesus is preparing for his passion. He has finished the last supper and given his apostles his last spoken lessons. They go to a garden to pray. What does the scripture say Jesus is feeling at this moment? Does it deter him?
2. What do you think those around him are feeling? Does he find support in them? Is he somewhat alone as he faces his cross? As leaders, husbands and fathers, are we often alone before the moral and leadership challenges we face?
3. Who does Jesus turn to in this moment? What is his “go to”, his refuge or escape?
4. What are my escapes or refuges when I face moral or spiritual challenges?
5. Fear is one the biggest challenges to fortitude, perseverance or grit. How does Jesus handle his fear? How do I handle my fears?
6. St. Paul writes how he endured challenges in preaching the gospel and following Christ. What does his testimony inspire in me?

Are they ministers of Christ? (I am talking like an insane person.) I am still more, with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, far worse beatings, and numerous brushes with death. Five times at the hands of the Jews I received forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I passed a night and a day on the deep; on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my own race, dangers from Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers at sea, dangers among false brothers; in toil and hardship, through many sleepless nights, through hunger and thirst, through frequent fastings, through cold and exposure. And apart from these things, there is the daily pressure upon me of my anxiety for all the churches.

**2 Corinthians 11:23-28**





## CASE DISCUSSION (30 MIN)

**2 ways to go about it.** Read the Case and discuss afterwards how it can apply to your leadership, parenting style. Or ask a member to voluntarily offer their challenges in practicing humility at home, in the work place or in their lumen action (volunteer work). The circle can offer some personal experiences on how they have confronted and resolved similar difficulties.

### Thomas Edison

When he was a young boy, Thomas Edison's parents pulled him out of school after teachers [called him](#) "stupid" and "unteachable." Edison spent his teenage years working and being fired from various jobs, culminating in his termination from a telegraph company at age 21. Despite these setbacks, Edison never deterred from his true passion, inventing. Throughout his career, Edison obtained 1,093 patents. And while many of these inventions - such as the light bulb, stock printer, phonograph and alkaline battery -- were groundbreaking, even more of them were unsuccessful. Edison is famous for saying that genius is "1% inspiration and 99% perspiration."

One of Edison's greatest stories of perseverance occurred after he was already wildly successful. After inventing the light bulb, Edison began a quest to find an inexpensive light bulb filament. At the time, ore was mined in the Midwest, and shipping costs were incredibly high. To combat this, Edison opened his own ore-mining plant in Ogdensburg, New Jersey. For roughly a decade, Edison devoted all his time and money to the plant. He also obtained 47 patents for inventions designed to make the plant run more smoothly. And after all of that, Edison's project still failed thanks to the low quality ore on the East Coast.

But as it turned out, one of the aforementioned 47 inventions (a newly-designed crushing machine) revolutionized the cement industry and earned Edison back nearly all of the money he lost. In addition, Henry Ford would later credit Edison's Ogdensburg project as the main inspiration for his Model T Ford assembly line, and many believe that Edison paved the way for modern-day industrial laboratories. Edison's foray into ore-mining proves that dedication and commitment can pay off even in a losing venture.

1. How can failure be turned into an opportunity?
2. Why is important to not give up on your dreams? And not to give up on God's dreams for you!
3. What helps you persevere in the midst of failure or lack of clarity?



## Lumen Core Values Self-Assessment (10 minutes)

**Core Values Assessment.** Spend 10 minutes in silence assessing positive and negative examples of how you have demonstrated perseverance in your relationship with others and God.

1. What types of tasks is it easy for me to persevere in? What types is it hard for me to persevere in? Why?
2. Do I usually follow through with commitments I make to others (family members, friends, colleagues, employees), to God, to myself (e.g. New Year's resolutions)? Why?
3. What goals or personal reforms have I been procrastinating? Why?
4. Why do I find prayer and religious activity so difficult?

The below quadrant can help in jotting down some of your assessment as well as a tool for the whole Lumen Circle and how you can let it be a leaven in your life.

**What struck me in this circle and how I might apply it to my THINKING. What CRITICAL ISSUES am I facing? What is the biggest CHALLENGES with these issues I face and what OPPORTUNITIES does it present.**

Prayer:

Family:

Business:

Lumen Action:

*What ACTION STEPS can I take now or long term?* Develop a concrete resolution for how you can improve in your efforts to exercise Christian charity in you interactions with others during the next month. Your resolution should be a specific action or activity that is easily measured.



## Resources:

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/margaretperlis/2013/10/29/5-characteristics-of-grit-what-it-is-why-you-need-it-and-do-you-have-it/#6497a1a04f7b>

<http://www.growthink.com/content/7-entrepreneurs-whose-perseverance-will-inspire-you>

## The Bible on perseverance

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. (Galatians 6:9)

Blessed is anyone who perseveres when trials come. Such a person is of proven worth and will win the prize of life, the crown that the Lord has promised to those who love him. (James 1:12)

Jesus said to him, "Once the hand is laid on the plough, no one who looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:62)

Blessed are those who suffer persecution in the cause of right; the kingdom of heaven is theirs. (Jesus, Matthew 5:10)

Enter by the narrow gate, since the road that leads to destruction is wide and spacious, and many take it; but it is a narrow gate and a hard road that leads to life, and only a few find it. (Jesus, Matthew 7:13-14)

He that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved. (Jesus, Matthew 10:22)

## Perseverance in Practice

### In Family

#### Perseverance Does...

- Find ways to show appreciation to your spouse every day, day after day, year after year
- Stay consistent in the standards you use to discipline your children
- Keep to a home budget that reflects the values and priorities of the family
- Forgive, forgive, forgive, and forgive again, again, and again, without limit,
- Ask pardon over and over and over again
- Stay faithful even when all the reasons to stay faithful seem to have disappeared

#### Perseverance Doesn't...

- Give up when a family member's faults don't go away
- Give up on improving one's own faults
- Give up on improving aspects of family life that seem impossible to improve
- Let passing emotions interrupt meaningful family traditions
- Start family projects and not finish them
- Renege on promises to one's spouse or children

### In Business

- Finish what it starts
- Find solutions to every problem and ways around every obstacle
- Stay on task even when the task becomes repulsive
- Keep its commitments
- Stick to its policies
- Have the courage to change when it is clearly in the best interest

- Frequently change the vision or the mission or the plan
- Give up after the first "no"
- Hesitate to grow, expand, and take on big, beneficial projects
- Give up because of bad moods

cfr. Lumen Core Value Reference Manual

[lumeninstitute.org](http://lumeninstitute.org)



Character



Faith



Leadership